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ABOVE POMPEII

ERNEST HATCH WILKINS
President of Oberlin College

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To the Memory of

ERNEST DEWITT BURTON

Preface

The future, far longer, far more important, than the past, is past-given, but it must not be past-bound.

Varying phases of this idea, which receives fullest and most direct expression in the first of the talks gathered in this book, appear in the other talks and in the concluding poem.

Most of the talks were prepared for college audiences at the University of Chicago or at Oberlin College. References to earlier forms of publication and to some related matters are embodied in a Note at the end of the book.

E. H. W.

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I

Above Pompeii

I

One of the highest-surging moments of my youth was that in which there came to me, as I stood on the summit of Vesuvius, the sense of the reality of the past.

I was not unprepared. For I had knowledge of the past, though not the sense of its reality—a knowledge gained through eager boyhood reading of history and of historical romance. Yet the past, for all its fascination, seemed but a treasure of the modern printed page. The time of my own life was real to me, and a dimmer reality touched the decades of which I had heard my elders tell—as though the figures of an old canvas should turn and move and then resume their place—but beyond lay only patterned surfaces.

And I had known that quickening of the spirit which comes as one gazes out over the world revealed from a New England mountain-top: unending and infinitely different uplifted masses of earth's majesty; profound valleys, their slopes clad here in lighter, there in darker green; swift streams, now

seen for a flashing instant, now traced where the descending tree-lines meet. But the drama thus surveyed, moving though it be, is the drama not of humanity, but of birth and change and death that are infra-human; of myriads of trees upreaching and of mysterious undergrowth, peopled alike with voiced and restless life; of rapid and cascade; of enfolding cloud; of wind and sun and swiftly passing shadow.

Thus I had had past without mountain, and mountain without past. Vesuvius, first, through mountain dominance over a historic scene, gave me historic vision.

I remember the long slow drive from Naples, under a clouded sky, through squalid suburbs, and then between walled vineyards with hard white dwellings by their gates; the unpleasant, sharp ascent in the funicular; the curious gray climb over springy ashes to the crater's edge; the abyss, filled with baffling, menacing smoke; and then the turn to the marvelous view.

Sunlight, now, revealed and defined the intense forms and colors: the plains and mountains of Campania, dotted with villages, the irregular white crescent of the city, clinging to hill and shore, the living blue of the bay—sails and smoke-pennons of its tiny craft scarcely astir—the strange beauty of the islands, the paler sea beyond, the dark tree-mass and the white cliffs of the peninsula, the nearer

heights, the deep immediate valley—and at my feet, far, far below, Pompeii.

The sun shone full upon its broken walls, into the little roofless pits that had been homes, upon the open spaces bared of their long burden of ashes. There life had stopped, in sudden terror, two thousand years ago—*but there, down there, right down there, two thousand years ago, life had been!*

And with that thought the sense of the reality of the past broke over me in a great wave of revelation. That life, the life lived down there, with its making and its bartering and its ways of idleness, with its stirring of bright garments in busy streets, with its sounds of excited talk, its shouts, its tears, its laughter, with its wonderings and its faiths, its cruelties and its loves—that life was as utterly real as my own. And if that life, then all life that has been lived by man.

Such intense consciousness of the reality of the past is indeed the gift of many a high place in Italy. It has come to me repeatedly, since that first day—most powerfully, perhaps, on the site of Tusculum, overlooking Rome and the Campagna, and at Fiesole, above the Arno valley and the storied loveliness of Florence. That spiritual height from which Dante surveys time and eternity was gained, I believe, not without such experience. Carducci, preeminently the poet of the past, speaks again and

again from a like vantage point. The coming of inspiration is to him an ascent:

> Io salgo de' secoli sul monte—
> I climb the mountain of the centuries.

Never, since that hour on Vesuvius, has the sense of the reality of the past gone from me. At first it seemed that the life of Greece and Rome, though real, was indeed ancient. Reality of life began with the beginning of recorded history. And my own time, though no more real than the preceding centuries, was something final toward which they had been moving. We were indeed the heirs of all the ages.

Then, as later years brought knowledge of earlier civilizations and of the very beginnings of civilization, the scope of the real past widened, gradually and easily, and its proportions changed. The life of Pompeii, now, seemed very near; and the twenty-five thousand years that take us back to the Neanderthal seemed no longer than the Christian era had seemed before. And in the new perspective my own time stood less securely ultimate.

II

The sense of the reality of the future grew, for me, as a logical projection of the sense of the reality of the past. But its permanent fixation came—again from Italy—through words of an Italian friend. We were talking of the conflicting inter-

ests of labor and capital; and he said: "We shall have a hard time of it for the next hundred years or more, but I think the adjustment will have been made within two hundred years."

He spoke with perfect simplicity, almost casually, as though such dealing with the future were the most natural thing in the world. To him, indeed, it was completely natural; for his sensitiveness to the significance of his Italian background had made him inevitably conscious of the succession of the centuries—a succession which, presently leaving us behind, will be going on and on and infinitely on. His mind beheld *sub specie aeternitatis*.

The sense of the reality of the future is harder to win and to develop than the sense of the reality of the past—not only because it is necessarily derivative in character, but because the specific content of the future is unknown. The past is a matter of record; the future seems rather to belong to the realm of dreams. Genealogical interest may search far back through the generations; but the corresponding forward look scarcely reaches beyond our grandchildren. Yet it takes but a resolute change of tense: *there will be life,* as the centuries run, identical in its human essence with our own, no matter how its habiliments may change. There will be toil and rest; there will be ugliness and beauty, invention and routine, meditation and passion; there will be suffering and delight.

The future is indeed more real than the past in that it summons to action, while the past is silent. The past is unchangeable, the future is plastic; for the past we have no moral concern, for the future we are responsible. The past is a matter of record; the future belongs to the realm of will.

III

With this conception, the ultimacy of our own time vanishes. There is nothing peculiarly honorable in our chronological position. We are still the heirs of all the ages that have gone, but we are no less truly the ancestors of all the ages that are to come. And our progeny will be infinitely more numerous than our ancestry.

Indeed, if thought range freely and courageously in a realized past and future, there results a new perspective, astounding in its implications, of the course of human civilization and of our place therein. For civilization runs back some twenty-five thousand years; and it runs forward . . . . how far?

There is, of course, the possibility of man-made disaster, and there is the possibility of terrestrial catastrophe. Barring such Roman or Pompeian tragedy, we have before us, as the time of our dwelling upon earth . . . . a thousand million years, according to the estimate of my colleague, Professor Forrest Moulton.

Let us accept that estimate, for a moment, and try to grasp something of its meaning. The numbers are easily written, easily uttered; but to bring them to the point of imaginative reality one must be ready to put forth exhausting effort, must win some share of the relentless power of Dante's penetrating vision:

> ... mill'anni—ch'è più corto
> Spazio, all' eterno, che un mover di ciglia
> Al cerchio che più tardi in cielo è torto—
>
> A thousand years—which, to eternity,
> Are briefer than the twinkling of an eye
> To the slow wheeling of the utmost star.

Consider the contrast: on the one side, twenty-five thousand years; on the other, a thousand million years. Mathematically, then, the course which civilization has still, potentially, to run is forty thousand times as long as the course it has already run. If you represent the past by a line one inch in length, it will take a line two-thirds of a mile long to represent the future. On the scale of a life of three-score years and ten, we are just entering the afternoon of our first day.

Change the terms, if you will. Take a lower estimate for the future of the race. Carry our past back beyond the beginning of civilization to the point of the physical differentiation of man. The length of

the time to come is in any case so vast that the essential force of the results remains unaltered.

We are most literally in the infancy of the race. We are, by the ultimate standard, primitive man.

IV

With this realization there comes first of all, I think, a profound sense of humility. How can we know, how can we expect to know, more than the least part of what mankind will ultimately know, more than the tiniest fraction of ultimate truth? How can we think that any antiquity of ours, however hoary, can suffice to justify forever any institution, any creed?

And there should come therewith a readiness to accept change, or to cause change. If we cannot claim ultimacy in social and economic relations, in government, in education, in religion, we should be ready to modify or to surrender that which is not ultimate, to put away, children though we are, the things that are seen as childish, to welcome all that seems worthy as hypothesis or as experiment.

Yet the same vista which suggests change implies in its vastness that our today scarce differs from our yesterday, and that yesterday's thought is not necessarily inferior to our own. Much has been learned; and though infinitely more remains as yet unlearned, we have the right to treasure all that which

we indeed possess. Change, then, should be reasoned change—something more than the absurdity of infantile rebellion; and in hypothesis and experiment there should be no place for arrogance.

The differentness of other men and of other lands loses, and gains, in import. It becomes less schismatic, if the new humility leads us to realize that we are not so likely, after all, to be uniquely and completely right. It mounts in power, if the new humility leads us to look beyond ourselves for help. Yet a reasoned humility does not by any means imply abject surrender. It does imply co-operation.

There is nothing peculiarly honorable in our chronological position—yet our own time *is* our own time. And in the long perspective we of the present day seem closer to each other. We share the same temporary conditions of life—conditions unlike those of our grandfathers, unlike those of our grandchildren. We have in common our own traditions, our own excitements, our own limitations.

Thinking thus, one gains a stronger and stronger sense of the comradeship of all of us who are alive together in just this world. As college classmates meet at a reunion with a deepened, clinging sense of the ties that have bound and bind them, with a loss of boyish jealousies, with a new welcome for men they had scarcely known before, so—if it be not too whimsical—one may imagine that in some fancied reunion of the centuries there might be,

among us, a deepened fellowship, many a handclasp now unforeseen, many a cry: "Well, old man, you were of the twentieth century, too, weren't you?" We are in time to carry back that fellowship into our present day.

What of the value, in such perspective, of one single life? Does not the individual become so microscopic as to lose significance? So one might think, at first; but reflection leads to a very different view. The *relative* importance of a single life is indeed less, but its *absolute* importance is far greater than we had supposed. For the future is plastic, is of our own responsibility, is within our will—and the future is immensely longer than we had realized. The ripples of a cast stone cannot go beyond the shore. If the pool be small, they are soon ended —but in a lake the impulse carries afar, spending itself quietly in gradual diminution. If the world were to end in a hundred years, it would make little absolute difference whether we give our children taint or vigor, whether we move toward war or peace. But if the ripples of our influence are to go on through so endless a transmission, it matters infinitely whether they be for good or ill. Every word and every deed impinges on and modifies other life. Whether we will or no, we live not unto ourselves, not unto our comrades only, but even unto the multitude of the unborn.

V

The new challenge to conduct, then, bids us live neither in easy reliance on accepted sanctions, nor in scorn of what we have won thus far, but on the basis of a merely incipient knowledge, yet with resolute vision—bids us live as loyal comrades in the stress and joy of coexistence and in the great adventure of the direction of a quasi-eternal human destiny.

II[1]

Truth Increasing

Then the third . . . . (this was Zorobabel) . . . . began to speak of the truth.

O ye men . . . . Great is the earth, high is the heaven, swift is the sun in his course, for he compasseth the heavens round about, and fetcheth his course again to his own place in one day. Is he not great that maketh these things? Therefore great is the truth, and stronger than all things. All the earth calleth upon the truth, and the heaven blesseth it: all works shake and tremble at it, and with it is no unrighteous thing. . . . . As for the truth, it endureth, and is always strong; it liveth and conquereth for evermore. With her there is no accepting of persons or rewards; but she doeth the things that are just, and refraineth from all unjust and wicked things; and all men do well like of her works. Neither in her judgment is any unrighteousness; and she is the strength, kingdom, power, and majesty, of all ages. Blessed be the God of truth.

And with that he held his peace. And all the people then shouted, and said, "Great is Truth, and mighty above all things."—I Esdras 4:13, 33–41.

I

The instinct to get knowledge is basic in man: it is to the brain what the instinct of manipulation

[1] The first lecture delivered in the University of Chicago Chapel.

is to the hand. It is the evolutionary development of the animal instinct of curiosity; but in so far as it surpasses curiosity, in so far as it seeks to ascend from the recognition of fact to the establishment of truth, in so far as it exercises the specific resources of the human brain, it is essentially and distinctively and nobly human.

So indeed many a thinker has proclaimed: Montaigne in his passing phrase, "For we are born to quest after the truth"; Cicero in his calm premise, "The search for truth and the investigation of truth primarily distinguish man"; and Aristotle, most effectively of all, in that never-to-be-forgotten first sentence of the *Metaphysics*, "All men have by nature the desire to know."

Truth we must have, as we must have air, as we must have food. Truth we must have, though the quest draw blood, though defense batter and exhaust. Absence of truth is a barrier to that fulness of life which we all centrally desire; denial of truth is a contraction of life; acceptance of truth is an enlargement of life.

Truth is always and ever an attribute of God; and the thought of perfect truth has been dominant in the minds of many who have said with Augustine: "Thou didst make us unto thyself, and restless is our heart until it find rest in Thee."

II

Our very eagerness for truth has led us ever to think that we have it, and that we have it all, or all but all. Like children reaching for the moon, we have so longed to know that we have willed the utmost bounds of knowledge to be within our grasp.

The world's philosophies and the world's religions, despite their formal recognitions of infinity, have in point of practice behaved as if the whole truth were by them possessed, or possessible, or almost possessible. Truth in its entirety has thus seemed to man a thing defined, or at least definable: a thing encircled, static, finite. On truth so conceived we have built our house of life.

Yet it is our very ignorance—our inevitable childish ignorance—that has led us to assert thus the extent of our knowledge, even as ignorance always magnifies the proportion of the known, is always blind to the extent and the significance of the unknown.

Isaac Newton, escaping by the power of his genius from the limitations of the common view, has this to say of his own achievement:

> I do not know what I may appear to the world; but to myself I seem to have been only like a boy playing on the sea-shore, and diverting myself in now and then finding a smoother pebble or a prettier shell than ordinary, whilst the great ocean of truth lay all undiscovered before me.

III

This same eagerness has led us to cherish as sacrosanct whatever we have once accepted as truth. No matter what the process of acceptance may have been—whether our truth has come by inheritance or by indoctrination or by our own effort, whether by conformity or by reason—we are ready in the name of truth to defend whatever we have thus accepted, and we dread and resist challenge and invasion.

What we defend—in the last probing analysis—is very likely to be, in large part, not truth as such, but *our* truth: not truth as true, but truth as the foundation of our own house of life. Such defense of truth is by no means ignoble. It is noble in proportion as the element of devotion to truth gains upon the element of self-defense. It is noble when it leads to martyrdom; it may be noble when it leads to persecution. It may be noble in the conservative as well as in the radical, in the Pharisee as well as in the Christian, in the fundamentalist as well as in the modernist.

For that reason I, though a modernist in my own convictions, can honor and do honor many whose concepts of truth I do not share. For in so far as a man is loyal to what he conceives to be truth, in so far I feel him akin to me, close to me, in a reverence for truth which is a more fundamental thing than his particular concept of truth or mine. And if he

will only share this view, then, with all our differences, we may be comrades indeed.

Now the bitterness of a man's defense of his own truth is directly related to the degree in which he conceives himself to be in possession, or almost in possession, of all truth. For if he believes that all truth is his, or may be his, or may almost be his; if he regards his truth as in any sense approaching totality, then of course he defends the truth he has. He would be recreant if he did not. For if his truth is total or quasi-total and his truth says thus and thus, while another man's truth, on the contrary, says so and so, then that other man is necessarily wrong. If a given block of truth is quasi-total, an opposing block cannot be truth. Two opposing blocks of quasi-total truth cannot coexist. There is not room for them.

If, however, we but realize that our belief in the totality of our truth is a product of an ignorance inevitable in what is still the childhood of humanity; if we but realize that the ranges of truth as yet unknown sweep infinitely beyond that which we know, even as the tens of millions of centuries ahead sweep far beyond those which we have lived; then surely the bitterness of opposing truths may relent and disappear.

If I claim that my truth is seventy-five per cent of the whole, and you make the same claim for your truth, and our two truths are opposed, then

will I fight for my truth to the death, and so will you. But if I claim that my truth is one per cent of the whole, and you make no higher claim for yours, then, if the two truths are not identical, I shall say to you: "We don't either of us seem to have any too much truth, do we? And yours is different from mine. It may be that we are both largely wrong. It may be that we are both largely right. There is plenty of room. We certainly need all the truth we can get. Let's compare notes." And the outcome should be no longer a fight to the death, but companionship in the great quest.

IV

But can we live on so small a fraction of truth? Truth conceived as complete appears, of course, to be a rock foundation. Truth conceived as complete is so ample that we may spin therefrom the laws and by-laws of a minute code of life. In case of doubt, we have but to consult the index, or the expert. Most of the time we know what's best to do. Even when we don't, we feel that we almost know, or that we might know; that the answer is somewhere there in the code, explicit or implicit, if we could only find it.

Life on such a basis is assured, stable, comfortable. Comfortable, at least, until the undecided questions so multiply and penetrate that you are driven to suspect that your code is not complete.

Comfortable, at least, until change of physical or social or intellectual environment confronts you, astounded and defiant, with codes other than your own.

Life on the basis of truth static is relatively easy. Life on hypothesis, life on the basis of truth increasing, is far harder; and therein lies its challenge. Anyone can live on a static code: it takes resolution and imagination to live manfully upon a basis which is itself in change.

To be loyal within the range of a closed system, wherein all relationships are defined, is relatively easy. Truth increasing calls for a loyalty so hearty, so far-seeing, that it needs no chart—a loyalty transcending response, transcending certainty.

To be clean is relatively easy when your own truth-world prescribes the formulas of cleanliness and breach of the code brings at the least some measure of ostracism. To be clean in a world which does not claim finality of wisdom and does not deal in esoteric penalties calls for an inner radiance of cleanliness.

To incur some measure of self-sacrifice is relatively easy when the effect is sure. Truth increasing calls for the high courage to incur sacrifice which may be of no avail—save in its stimulus to other sacrifice which shall avail.

The earlier concepts of God lend themselves to

relatively easy habits of regimentation and obedience. The newer concepts offer no such infallibility of inference from cause to conduct; and man, assuming a far heavier burden of responsibility, moves in a new land where the decisions are his own.

Yet I, for one, maintain that it is better to live on the basis of truth increasing than on the basis of truth static. Better to live on a truth known to be infinitesimal and known to be in vital growth than on the basis of data fixed and circumscribed. Better to rove in adventure than to vegetate, windswept but rooted. In the process of evolution there has been no greater stride than the acquisition of motility. May it not be that the acceptance of truth as motile may work a comparable advance in the field of human thought?

I know that I can know but a fraction of ultimate truth. What then? I am ready to make the best of what I have, to get more as I can, to add a tiny bit, if I may, to mankind's growing store. I am ready to accept racial childhood, to share unashamed in its ignorance, to delight in its plays and its plights, in its make-believes and its private languages, in its wanderings and its wonderings, in its swiftness and its song. Yet I, in my own relative right, desire to be adult.

To live on the basis of truth increasing means, in

reality, to live on the basis of truth as truth, rather than on the basis of truth as yours or truth as mine. And if our house of life is built on truth, it means that we must be ready ever to renew our foundations—nay more, from time to time, to move the house itself.

Some of you who are here perhaps witnessed, in August and September, 1926, the moving of the large brick house which is now the Graduate Club of this University. It had stood on the corner of University Avenue and Fifty-eighth Street for so many years that it seemed rooted indissolubly there. Yet the movers came; and with infinite patience, respecting its every beam and upright, its every wall and opening, its every unit of brick and glass, they placed their timbers beneath the floors—then, when all was ready, lifted the house, slowly and evenly—then, with a marvelous slow precision, drew it into the avenue—then to the north, slowly, silently, while unfamiliar branches brushed its windows—then finally to the foundation newly and modernly prepared for it. And through all the moving the house within remained unshaken, undisturbed.

Even so, if need arise, may the house of life be moved from one foundation to another. For the framework of the house of life is not this truth nor that, but the unchanging truth of truth; and the light that makes it home is unchanging love.

V

Life on the basis of truth increasing has not only its greater difficulties but its special dangers—chiefly, perhaps, the danger of disheartenment at the loss of old truth, the danger of mistaking novelty for truth, and the danger of arrogance.

Nothing so precious as an accepted truth can be surrendered without pain; but the palliative, the cure, the more-than-cure, lies in this: that only a greater truth can really displace a lesser; that the very abandonment of an old truth means contact with a greater one. There can be no loss in truth itself. The very concept of the infinite range of unknown truth which is in the background of our thought assures us that there lie ahead stores of truth whose vastness is as yet unguessed.

In particular, there is danger that the abandonment of an outworn truth may seem to invalidate the practices or relationships or ideals which had been associated with it. This does not follow in the least. Conclusions may be perfectly sound—in ethics as well as in astrophysics—even though the particular premises hitherto alleged in their support may be unsound. Indeed, the central practices and relationships and ideals of human society have been hallowed in the first instance rather because of an instinctive sense of their validity than by deduction from a system of truth. The lines of supposed causal justification have been, to a large extent, a

secondary device. And in this day of questioning, when we are no longer content to regard instinct as a sufficient sanction, when we demand scientific sanctions for all that we do or say or think, it is urgently needful that those who would live, and help the world to live, on truth increasing should busy themselves, as older sanctions tend to disappear, with the establishment of new sanctions for the reinforcement of the values which seem to us eternal—new sanctions which in their turn, as the centuries pass, will be superseded by still other sanctions, which will come closer still to ultimacy.

There is danger also that in our readiness to accept new truth we may mistake newness for truth itself; may accept a thing as true when it is merely novel. The caution here is the fundamental caution of science itself: nothing is to be accepted until it be tested and tested and retested again and again. And the necessity of the testing increases in proportion as the experience concerned is centrally significant in human life.

The danger of arrogance is quickly to be dispelled. Possession of some measure of increased truth does carry with it a certain temptation to arrogance; but the temptation vanishes if one will but consider that, judged on the infinite scale, today's new truth, even if it be better than yesterday's, is better by an infinitesimal degree. It cannot be so much better as to entitle any man to think himself

proudly advanced beyond his contemporaries or his predecessors. The whole tendency of the new concept is toward a healthy humility with regard to the absolute significance of our present possession of truth, and with regard to the differences between our truth and the truth of other lands or other times. Indeed, the concept of truth increasing makes powerfully, as I have already suggested, toward the recognition of inner likenesses, toward the establishment of companionship in the great quest; and herein, perhaps, lies the greatest gift which it has in store for man.

VI

I have spoken hitherto of the adaptations necessary for any thinking man if he would adjust his life to the changes in thought which flow around him. For those of us who are University men and women, the idea of truth increasing has a more active challenge; for it is our privilege to take some part, tiny though it may be, in the actual task of increasing truth.

The challenge to increasing truth becomes wider and more compelling in its appeal in proportion as we realize the vastness of that which is still to be discovered. When Aladdin bade the genie of the lamp to construct the most wonderful of all palaces, he ordered that it be crowned by a hall having four-and-twenty windows, the lattices of all of which

save one should be enriched with rubies, emeralds, and diamonds. When the sultan came to pay a visit, he was overwhelmed with admiration for all he saw; but he was puzzled about the twenty-fourth window. "Son," he said, "this hall is the most worthy of admiration of any in the world; there is only one thing that surprises me, which is, to find one of the windows unfinished. Is it from the forgetfulness or negligence of the workmen, or want of time, that they have not put the finishing stroke to so beautiful a piece of architecture?" "Sir," answered Aladdin, "it was for none of these reasons that your majesty sees it in this state. The omission was by design; it was by my orders that the workmen left it thus, since I wished that your majesty should have the glory of finishing this hall."

For us a greater glory is reserved. In the slowly rising edifice of truth, scarce one of the myriad windows is as yet adorned.

The joy of the discovery of new truth is closely akin to the joy of artistic creation. In each case there is required the long patience of preparation; and in each case there is required the flame of insight, whose final kindling and sudden flash and sure radiance are a source of noble pleasure. When you increase truth, therefore, you are not only enriching the field of knowledge: you are sharing the experience of art. In proportion as this fact is recognized, the workers in either field may come

to a fuller understanding, a more effective sense of fellowship, with their co-workers in other fields.

All thorough research which deals with significant material is of value. It is not necessary that the scholar should foresee the outcome of his research or the uses to which its results may eventually be put. He may even work, as it were, in a vacuum, for the sake of his own satisfaction, with but the slightest consciousness, perhaps, that his results may bring gladness to the larger self of human society. I have enough faith in the power of knowledge to assert, and to assert with confidence, that every piece of pure research which deals with material of potential human significance and is carried through with vigor and with uncompromising honesty will somehow, in some place, at some time —in combination perhaps with a suggestion made in a later age or in a different land—find its fruition in the measurable enrichment of truth, and, through truth, of human life.

The immense magnitude of the field of undiscovered truth suggests that research must be in essence co-operative. Now and then the supermen, Newton and Leonardo, achieve a marvelous individual conquest. But even their work is conditioned and made possible by earlier work; even their work reveals its meaning more fully through later interpreters. For those of us who have no such transcendent genius the conscious co-opera-

tion of our own associates is a necessity, as it is in itself a delight. You are the more my fellow-man because I need your help in the making of truth.

There is a sense also, and a very real sense, in which co-operation in the establishment of truth may be given, and for the common good must be given, by educated men and women who are not themselves discoverers. For progress is not progress until the great thought of a leader of the first order has been taken up and applied and democratized by leaders of the second order. How often in the past has such a thought been delayed in fruition, or perished utterly, for lack of those who could translate it into practice! There is no one of us, then, discoverer or not, who, if he faithfully qualify himself for such a task, may not co-operate effectively in the establishment of truth.

VII

For the Chapel of the University of Chicago my desire and my prophecy are that it may, and that it will, foster a religious life based on truth increasing.

Here, if anywhere, may the visions be seen and the voices be heard which shall confirm men in their reverence for truth as truth. Here, if anywhere, may there be courageous recognition of the fact that the total sum of our present knowledge is but fractional, and of the fact that older and smaller truths, no matter how dearly loved, no matter how

bitterly defended, may ultimately yield and merge and be transformed in larger truths. Here, if anywhere, may there be, against the background of such loyalty, the reasoned conservation and reinforcement of the native idealism of youth.

In the great upward reach of the Chapel tower the towers of laboratory and of library co-operate. I would have the Chapel keenly alive to every message from its companion buildings, eager to receive every new datum of science, eager to explore its possible significance, to dicover what it means for the inner life of man. Here there should be no slightest shadow of obscurantism. Only through utter devotion to ultimate truth can the Chapel fulfil its high destiny.

Yet even truth is a means to life; and the Chapel symbolizes other means as well, and their integration. May the Chapel help you, in the power of truth increasing, and in the power of beauty increasing and of love increasing, to achieve a life which shall be life indeed!

III

Three Lives, If . . . .

Three familiar lives, not as they actually were, but as they might have been, if . . . .

I

A century ago a boy was born, in Kentucky, of hardy pioneer stock. All through his childhood and youth, in Kentucky, in Indiana, and in Illinois, he lived the rough and vigorous life of the pioneer. In hard and humble tasks—clearing the land, wrestling with the soil, building rude shelters, and then homes only less rude—he brought his body to superb strength.

His eager mind matched his body. He learned the lore of the woods. From the few books that came within his reach he wrung all that they had to give him. But he learned still more from the men who came and went through the pioneer country. Men delighted to talk with him, not only because of his keenness, but because of his humour and his kindliness. And he delighted in their companionship.

For a time he kept a ferry on the Ohio River, and the very stream carried his interest afar and to the

South. Later, on a trading venture, he made his way down to New Orleans. There, for the first time, he came fully into the presence of the overshadowing social wrong of his day. Returning, shocked, from the slave market, he said to his companions, "If I ever get a chance to hit that thing, I'll hit it hard."

Years passed before his chance came. He had proved himself in many ways a popular leader, had won success as lawyer, and had at last been elected to Congress.

There he met his crisis. For just at that time the question of slavery came up again and again, with reference either to the District of Columbia or to the new territories of the West. Feeling ran high, and he knew that his own future hung in the balance.

He had powerful friends in Washington, who wanted to keep slavery there; he knew that a stand for abolition would alienate many of his own constituents in Illinois; and he feared the coming of a terrible conflict.

When the moment for decision came he did not have the nerve to set the dangerous right above the easy continuance of wrong. He did not have the nerve to live up to his convictions at the cost of isolation and of failure. He voted with the slaveholding conservatives.

He prospered. He won the reputation of being a

safe man. He was re-elected to Congress for a number of terms, and retired ultimately to a rich private practice. He lived in comfort to a long old age.

And the black shadow of slavery grew wider and deeper over the land.

II

Five hundred years ago, in a cottage in the hamlet of Domremy, on the banks of the river Meuse, a peasant girl sat spinning. But though her fingers were busy with the distaff and the thread, her thoughts were tingling with the shame of France. Oh for a prophet to rouse the French to a sense of national loyalty! Oh for a champion to gather them into armies, and drive the pitiless English invaders back to their island!

Suddenly thread and distaff fell forgotten, for there flashed before her mind the wild thought that she, even she, might speak, might lead. And with throbbing heart she cherished the vision.

Again and again, as the months passed, it came back to her, ever more insistently. Yet surely it was absurd that she, a peasant girl, should dream such dreams, impossible that she should lead a new crusade!

The sufferings of France increased, and the visions would not depart. She could no longer keep them to herself. Her friends, dearly though she loved them, shrank away from her strangeness,

and a great sense of loneliness was added to her distress. From her family came anger, protest, and dismay.

At last, driven beyond endurance, she resolved to go to the King's representative in the city of Vaucouleurs. Surely if her vision were sent from heaven she would be able to convince him of its truth, and to win his consent to take her to the King. So with high hope she came before him and told what had befallen her.

But he laughed her to scorn, and bade her companions take her home, as a madwoman. And as he mocked, the blackness of failure rushed over her, and her spirit refused to keep up the struggle.

Silently they led her back to Domremy; silently she took her part in the household toil. The visions came, but she stifled them in a delirium of other thoughts, and at last they ceased. Gradually the hamlet received her again into its dull routine.

Meanwhile the English pressed forward, burning and devastating, from city to city, till at last they captured the king and his capital. And France for a century more remained in vassalage.

III

Nineteen centuries ago a boy grew up in the hillside town of Nazareth, in Galilee. His father was a carpenter, and his boyhood days were spent for the most part in his father's shop. There he

played with the sawdust and the cut wood, watched his father at his tasks, and listened to the talk of the men who came in to see how their work was getting on. On Saturdays, when he was old enough, he went to the synagogue, deeply interested in its elaborate ritual. And he often climbed to the hill above the town and gazed and gazed over the plain, checkered with plowed fields and varied hues of green, to the mountains beyond—Carmel, Gilboa, Tabor, Hermon.

As he grew older he worked by his father's side; and more and more he listened, as men of all sorts and conditions sat there talking of human interests and hopes and sorrows.

Life grew more complicated. Little by little, partly through teaching and partly through punishment, he learned the maze of creed, of ritual, and of law that radiated from the synagogue and touched and limited well-nigh every act of life. Now, when he climbed his hilltop and lay at full length, the distance spread before him, his thoughts turned more and more to the strange and sad fact that religion, for all its shining spirit, should be thus obscured in formalism.

He was by nature deeply religious, deeply conscious of love for God and love for neighbor, deeply desirous that his love might find true and simple expression, both in worship and in life.

And on one memorable sunlit day, alone upon

his hilltop, he came to the resolve that he would speak of the matter, and that he would indeed spend the strength of his life in the endeavor to simplify and to purify religion, to him the most essential of all things. The resolve exalted him. Could it be that this was the messianic service foretold by the prophets? Could it be that he, even he, was the chosen one?

But the task, begun at home, was not easy. His father, scarcely comprehending the idea of change, warned him, on pain of disinheritance, not to stray from the trodden path of custom. And he loved his father.

He spoke, once, to three of his friends. And one, though fearfully, said yes; and one said nothing; and one, utterly shocked, drew away as from a thing unclean.

The rabbi learned of it, and spoke; and he came soon to know that if he followed his vision he must forsake father and mother and brothers and sisters and friends, and become a wanderer on the face of the earth.

An hour of agony on the hilltop brought his surrender. He had not the strength of spirit to endure hatred and loneliness. So he held his peace. He dwelt on in Nazareth, more and more taciturn, not daring to think. He fared well, in a humble way, for he was a good carpenter.

And no cross ever shone from Calvary.

IV

Rameses II to James Henry Breasted

I

Age-distant, sea-distant one, who art thou? Why troublest thou our long quietness? What seekest thou?

Is it gold and ivory and lapis lazuli? Is it vase and chariot and diadem? Is it wealth thou seekest?

What is wealth! Knowest thou not the tale of the Poorest Richest?

Hear, then!

In the days of the Seventh Dynasty there dwelt by the sacred river a Baron of large estate, of comfortable abode, and of great retinue. Yet was he ever ill content with what he had, ever greedy for more, ever jealous of his neighbors. And the King, knowing this, sent for a Wise Man, and counseled with him, how the Baron might be cured. Wherefore the Wise Man cast his spells, and wrought a charm in the guise of a withered flower, and went before the Baron. In the King's name he bade him gather all his retinue, from the greatest to the least. And when they were come together the Wise Man spoke, and said: "Hail, O Baron! I bring thee from

the King a gift which shall be for the richest of this thy household. And this shall be the sign: when he that is richest shall touch the gift it shall be transfigured." So then the Baron touched the charm; but it changed not. Then came his first steward and touched the charm; but it changed not. Then came likewise the understeward, and the cupbearer, and the baker, and the interpreter, and the musicians, and all the servants of the house. But last of all there came a simple slave of the fields. And when he touched the charm, of a sudden, lo, it blossomed forth a great and perfect lotus flower. And the slave's heart was lifted up, and he held the flower on high, and cried: "O my master, O my comrades, behold what beauty!" And upon its petals were strange symbols, and this was the legend:

THINE IS LEAST THINE IF ONLY THINE
THINE IS MOST THINE IF MORE THAN THINE

So the Baron was converted from his discontent, and true wealth reigned in his household.

II

Age-distant, sea-distant one, thou smilest; and I more clearly see thee and comprehend thee now. It is not wealth thou seekest: thou seekest rather to illumine time.

Yet what is time, my son! Knowest thou not the tale of the General of the Armies of Amenhotep?

Hear, then!

The aged Emperor upon a day made ready to dine in his Theban palace, and his court with him. Before each guest lay a golden basin for the washing of hands, and beside each guest stood a slave with a golden ewer of water. Entered then three Wise Men from afar. And the Emperor, seeing them, bade them come forward, and the slaves to wait. And the Wise Men then and there wrought certain wonders, such as had never been known aforetime, whereat the Emperor marveled greatly. And when they had done he spoke and said to them: "What will ye have in recompense? For it shall be given you." And they said: "Give us the general of your armies, that he may come with us, and put our enemies to flight." And the Emperor looked upon the General of the Armies, and he came and knelt before him, and departed with the Wise Men. And as they went out, the singers lifted a pleasant melody; and the slaves bent to pour water from the golden ewers into the golden basins.

The Wise Men and the General of the Armies traveled for many days across the desert, and they brought him at last into their own country, and made him chief of their armies. Three pitched battles he fought, and scattered all their enemies. The King of that country gave him his daughter to wife. And it came to pass that the King died, and he reigned in his stead. And his wife bore him

sons, princely, good to look upon. And the land prospered greatly.

Now after fifty years were passed, the Wise Men came unto him and said: "Hail, O King! Return we now to the court of Amenhotep." And the King laughed them to scorn, and said: "Now fifty years have passed, and of a surety Amenhotep sleepeth in the hills, and his court is no more." Yet the Wise Men prevailed upon him. So they journeyed for many days across the desert, and came to Thebes, and entered the palace. And lo, there sat the Emperor Amenhotep and his court, even as they had left them: the song of the singers was sweet upon the air, and the slaves were pouring the water from the golden ewers into the golden basins.

For the fifty years were but a dream-wonder wrought by the Wise Men upon the General of the Armies.

III

Age-distant, sea-distant one, thou smilest still.

I see thee clearly, and all in all I comprehend thee now.

It is this thou seekest: that thou mayest show that man is all akin, that life's most precious gift is the kindness of man to man. Thou has learned aright; and I hail thee no more as the distant one. For e'er the tale of life be spent upon this earth so

many ages on ages shall succeed that the years which lie 'twixt me and thee shall be but as a moment that is gone. And if thou seekest for thy message accents which I can teach thee—that which is mine is thine.

Thou art welcome, brother.

V

Art as Spiritual Energy

Much of my life has been spent in the teaching of literature. One could ask no happier profession; for the ranges of interest and satisfaction which literature affords are widely varied and limitless in extent. At times my interest, like that of many of my colleagues, has centered in literature as the highest form of the expression of thought—as the highest phase, that is, of an achievement which is in itself a patent of evolutionary nobility. More deeply, in recent years, have I been impressed with the importance of the transmissive function of literature, for literature is the chief medium whereby the phenomena of human experience which seem significant to a human group in one time and place are passed on to other human groups.

The fortunes of home and community life have given me a continuing and active interest in music; and the fortunes of travel and certain special teaching opportunities have given me a continuing and active interest in the plastic arts. The consciousness of literature and of these other several arts as closely coexisting and as obviously interrelated has natu-

rally led me to a special interest in the art qualities of literature—and to inquiry as to the essential differences and the essential oneness of the several arts.

I

The five major divisions of the field of art are of course those which we commonly call the "fine arts": architecture, sculpture, painting, music, and literature.

Think of these several arts for a moment, if you will, not in the abstract, but in typical examples. For architecture, take the Parthenon; for sculpture, Saint-Gaudens' statue of Lincoln; for painting, Leonardo da Vinci's Last Supper; for music, Rachmaninoff's Second Symphony; for literature, *As You Like It.*

The Parthenon, the Lincoln, the Last Supper, the Rachmaninoff symphony, *As You Like It:* how very different they are! Yet if you seek for likenesses within the series, certain likenesses are obvious.

The first three of the works cited appeal to the eye, the last two to the ear. Architecture, sculpture, and painting are the visual arts; music and literature, the auditory arts. If you challenge that statement as regards literature, I can pause only to assert, in its defense, that the ideal presentation of literature is through the human voice, heard actually or in imagination.

A second analysis gives the same grouping. The works of architecture, sculpture, and painting are static: that is, they exist in space, fixed and changeless—and in so far as they represent, they represent the status of things at a single moment. Music and literature, on the other hand, are continuous: they move in time; change is of their essence, in content and in form.

But there appears also another and very different classification of the five arts, a classification not absolute, but still valid in its general lines. Sculpture, painting, and literature deal normally with the facts of experience. They represent. They have as content material drawn directly from the life of man, or from nature as affecting man. Architecture and music, on the other hand, do not represent: they are concerned normally with the expression of abstract relationships. It is a recognition of the kinship of architecture and music in this respect which leads to the familiar saying that architecture is frozen music. By use of the word "abstract" I do not mean to imply that architecture and music in any sense lack vitality; but simply to indicate that they are normally withdrawn from the sheer facts of experience. Music, to be sure, has often a specific emotional content which allies it to literature, and program music borrows much of the nature of painting and descriptive poetry—but these are special cases.

Combining our classifications, we have the following results: architecture is visual-static and abstract; sculpture and painting are visual-static and experiential; music is auditory-continuous and abstract; literature is auditory-continuous and experiential.

II

If these be the differences and the partial likenesses of the several arts, what is it that they all have in common? What is it that entitles them to share in the single name of art?

Think again of the five examples. See in your mind's eye, if you can, the rhythmic columns of the Parthenon; the superb dignity of the statue of Lincoln; the dramatic intensity of the Last Supper. Listen in imagination, if you can, to the surging strings of the symphony, or to the "running brooks" of *As You Like It.*

Take another set of examples: the cathedral of Chartres; a Della Robbia bas-relief; a winter landscape by Gardner Symons; Respighi's "Fountains of Rome"; Shelley's *Ode to the West Wind.*

What is the factor, the gift, the quality common to these great creations?

It is, I think, a certain type of energy: an energy not physical, but in part intellectual and in part emotional—an energy which proceeds from both heart and mind, and may enrich the life of both heart and mind. We may call it either "intellectual-

emotional energy," or, for the sake of brevity, we may call it "spiritual energy," provided we understand that the word "spiritual" as thus used has no specifically religious sense, but simply designates that phase of life which is not physical, and is both intellectual and emotional.

Is there not such energy in the Parthenon and the cathedral; in the works of Saint-Gaudens and Della Robbia and Leonardo and Gardner Symons; in the Rachmaninoff symphony and the "Fountains of Rome"; in *As You Like It* and the *Ode to the West Wind?*

Such energy is not limited to the field of art: if it were, that field would be closed and self-contained. It is a type of energy wherein we all share, and it is transmissible. Thus it comes about that art may affect and does affect our inmost lives.

How does a work of art possessing such energy come into being, in any field? And what is its essential, vital service?

There are two fundamental conditions for the production of a work of art. The first is the presence in the artist of a surplus of this spiritual energy of which I have been speaking. Every one of us has at any time more or less of such energy. We need a certain amount of it to carry on the normal activities of life. That amount we may call the normal amount. But our stock of this energy is not constant; it rises and falls, like the mercury in a

thermometer. When it falls below the normal, we are depressed, and seek from some source an influx of renewing energy. When it rises above the normal, we are exalted, and tend naturally to express, to release, in some way, the abounding energy. Such a state on the part of the artist is, as I have indicated, the first fundamental condition for the production of a work of art.

The second condition is this: while the spiritual energy is welling high in the artist, there must come to him some compelling impression which serves to discharge the pent-up energy. That impression may come in essence from a real sight, or from a real complex of sound, or from a real human experience; or it may come in essence from within the artist's imagination. But it is necessary for the production of a work of art that a compelling impression of some sort present itself to the artist when he is in a state of surplus energy.

The process of art production, in any field—architecture, sculpture, painting, music, or literature—consists then in the release of surplus spiritual energy through the rendering of a certain impression—utilizing, of course, a particular artistic medium. But that statement is not quite complete: the result of the process, as thus defined, would not necessarily be a true work of art at all. If the result is to be worthy of the name of art it is not enough that the impression be rendered *somehow* or *any-*

how. It is necessary that the impression be rendered *loyally*. The impression may come to the artist in a moment's flash, or it may be a thing of slow and gradual growth. But its true utterance in any case takes time, often a very long time. So the art process is twofold. It involves inspiration plus faithful labor—a touch of the divine fire plus patient, even exhausting, human toil. For if the production is to be truly a work of art, the creator must strive resolutely until his impression in its fulness, as it was revealed within the depths of his mind and heart, is finally wrought out in stone or bronze or pigments or tones or words. And the medium, external, objective, is often refractory, hard to dominate, hard to bend to the utterance of the inner human impression.

If the work of art is to be something more than merely true, if it is indeed to be great, three conditions must unite in its making: the store of surplus energy must be large; the impression must be one of widely human appeal; and the rendering must be completely loyal.

Now the wonder of art lies in this, that a work so produced is not merely a result, an accomplishment, a record of achievement, but that the energy and the impression liberated from the personality of the artist live on eternally in the work.

The impression, obviously, lives on, fixed forever in design or form or color or harmony or style.

And that is good: for the impression, in great art at least, is one which may well stir generation after generation. But the greater marvel is that the energy lives on as well. Milton saw and phrased this truth, in the *Areopagitica,* with particular reference to literature:

> Books . . . . doe contain a potencie of life in them to be as active as that soule was whose progeny they are; nay, they do preserve as in a violl the purest efficacie and extraction of that living intellect that bred them.

The work of art is indeed a perennial, inexhaustible reservoir of spiritual energy; and from that reservoir the energy may pass, with all its life-enhancing power, into the minds and hearts of other men and other women.

Is not that true of the Cleveland Terminal Tower? of Michelangelo's Moses? of a Whistler etching? of the "Erlkönig"? of Carlyle's *Heroes and Hero-Worship?*

Nor is that all. For the true work of art not only offers the joy of its own impression, but it so tempers the mind and heart of the beholder or the listener that he becomes better able to discover for himself, in the world about and within him, impressions similar to that which moved the artist. So, for instance, a Japanese print may sensitize the mind to a greater delight in beauty of line, wherever found; so a great painting of clouds may sensitize the mind to a richer perception of beauty in

real clouds; so a literary study of character may sensitize mind and heart to a finer sense of human fellowship.

And the true work of art not only offers the joy of its own life-giving energy, but enlarges the recipient's capacity for such energy. For the very intaking of energy from the work of art fills the lungs of the spirit, starts a deeper breathing, makes possible a larger spiritual health.

Since, then, the work of art enables us to discover great impressions for ourselves and enlarges our very capacity for spiritual energy, it becomes in some measure true, paradoxical though it may seem, that the function of art is to enable us to do without art.

The appreciation of a work of art consists, finally, in opening mind and heart to receive the impression and the spiritual energy which it conveys, and to receive as well a finer sensitiveness to similar impressions, and an enlarged capacity for spiritual energy. And if the appreciation is to be deep and true, it requires a process of loyal discernment comparable to the artist's process of loyal creation—yet simpler, and without the sacrificial self-spending of creative loyalty.

If in the presence of a true work of art—building, statue, painting, aria, drama—you will thus loyally open heart and mind, you may win thereby a direct and profound enrichment of life.

Authentic confirmation of much that I have tried to suggest is to be found in certain stanzas of a poem on poetry by Carducci (the "Congedo" of his *Rime nuove*)—a poem wonderfully clear in its revelation of the process of art production, and nobly vigorous in its own abounding energy:

Like a smith the poet is,
And the plying of his trade
Hath of steel his muscles made,
  Till they with his hammers vie;
Proud he doth his head upraise,
  Clear his forehead, gay his eye.

When the bird at daybreak sings,
And the gleam of early light
Rests upon the waiting height,
  He the bellows full doth urge
Till the ruddy fire springs
  Cheerily within the forge.

Now the flame darts upward high,
Flashing sparks of ruddy gold,
Leaping with defiance bold
  Far above the glowing tools;
Now it sinks as though to die,
  Lurking low amid the coals.

What the flame may be, who knows?
Only He that doth the fire
Of the human heart inspire.
  But the smith, when white-intense
Every burning ember glows,
  Casts therein the elements

Of his deepest love and thought:
Treasures of his memory,
Glories of his ancestry,
  Hopes that yet shall come to pass,
All lie molten to be wrought
  In the incandescent mass.

Now the glowing bar he bends
And upon the anvil lays,
Then with shaping hammer plays;
  Strikes, and while he strikes he sings;
Strikes, the while the sun ascends
  And the forge with clamor rings.

Strikes, and lo! for liberty
Here are shields, and here are swords
That shall smite despotic lords;
  And for those who vanquish them
Here are wreaths of victory;
  Here for love a diadem.

Strikes, and lo! for sacred shrine
Here are altars with the story
Graven fair of martyrs' glory;
  Here are goblets that shall render
Dearer still the sparkling wine
  'Mid the banquet's joyous splendor.

For himself, of ruddy gold
Makes he then a single dart;
Hurls it upward from his heart
  Toward the sun; and its ascent
And its gleaming doth behold,
  And, beholding, is content.

VI

Dervishes and Votive Hearts

I

Fresh from a boyish denominationalism which doubted the acceptability of such folk as Baptists and Methodists, I sat in a low, dark room in Skutari. A railing separated the visitors' space from an inner square. The Mecca wall was decorated with weapons, candles, brass ornaments, and inscriptions in Arabic characters.

Dervishes enter, wearing black turbans and long robes, some black, some colored. The sheikh—dark eyes deep-set in a sallow, darkly bearded face—kneels before the *mihrab*. The others, with strange motions and strange sounds, begin their prayers.

Prayers? Can this be prayer? In its utter strangeness can it be aught but heathenish mockery?

They stand upright, bend forward, straighten up, then kneel and touch the floor with their foreheads—all this repeatedly, mumbling the while, now and then speaking aloud.

The sheikh leads them in a mumbled responsive chant; then, while the chant continues, one of the

dervishes starts a high tremulous recitative—another takes it up—from time to time they all join in for a phrase or two.

Religion? Travesty!

They take their places in orderly arrangement: some squatting in the center, the rest standing in a row back to the railing. Those in the center resume the high tremulous recitative. The standing figures respond in a continuous low rumbling. They begin now, as they chant, to sway from side to side, forward and back, slowly at first, then more and more violently. Voices rise in a weird intensity, eyes glow with a rising emotion, there is a passion in the swaying.

Travesty? They are feeling something. They are meaning something.

The tremulous recitative continues, rising, falling, incessant, merciless, piercing, possessing the air; from the swaying human wall comes an answering choral thunder, broken by sudden, irregular cries. The crescendo continues for ten minutes, twenty minutes, half an hour, unbearably. The sheikh moves among them, leading, exhorting—his dark face luminous. Fiercely they fling themselves from side to side. There is groaning and sobbing; their bodies are driven by more than human force; their faces, uptossed, are transfigured.

Something happens in me. This thing, this thing that is going on before me, is strange, is

to me even terrible; but it is completely meant, intensely felt, utterly authentic. What I am seeing and hearing is reality. Nothing but inner fire could so drive and burn; and that fire—that fire—is the same which, in the calm of a New England sanctuary, I too have known.

Since the flashing moment of that recognition I have felt a certain kinship with any man who might know such ardor; a certain validity in any transforming devotion; a certain reverence for ceremonies of authentic worship, however foreign.

Out of the very shock of barbaric difference, hiding a sameness suddenly revealed, there came to me an abiding tolerance.

II

My companion and I, Latinists both, after some weeks in Rome, were studying the vestiges of that earlier civilization against whose champions Horatius kept the bridge.

We had spent the morning on the broad, rock-borne plateau whence Veii for generations had challenged Rome. No trace now of all its flaunting Etruscan pride—no dwellings, no palaces, no courts, no temples. Half of the site a vast white field of grain, tall, waving, hot, shadeless, unbroken save by the one path through which we went; half still more deeply lost in forest oblivion. No trace of what had been, save for a few bits of

deeply grooved stone road under foot here and there, and one ancient tomb whose lions, after two thousand years and more, had been thwarted of their faithful guardianship.

We lunched with our peasant guide at the inn of a little town near by—the inn a single room, kitchen, dining-room, living-room, stable, all in one. After lunch he said that he had in his barn some things that we might like to see; and we followed him there.

As he drew back the door the light fell on a great pile of curious objects nearly covering the floor and sloping up in one corner almost to the roof. They were rough models, in a reddish clay, of arms, legs, hands, feet, eyes, ears, heads, bodies, hearts. They had hung once on temple walls, visible, tangible prayers for the relief of suffering or tokens of gratitude for relief which the gods had deigned to grant; emblems of ancient pain and ancient hope brought back to the light of day by a peasant's mattock.

I had seen votive offerings before, of course, in Italian churches. But the pathos of this jumbled mass, the contrast of this survival with the vanished greatness, left in my mind an impression as deep as the grooves in the old Etruscan road.

In just one other place, in later years, have I seen a closely similar mass of votive offerings—this time in the heart of a modern city.

As you go down the Calle de Fuencarral toward the Puerta del Sol, in Madrid, there is—or was, at least, some years ago—a large open shrine on the left. In that shrine, as I saw it, there hung masses of clay models of arms, legs, hands, feet, eyes, ears, heads, bodies, hearts. They differed from those of Veii only in color—the Spanish models were grayer than the Etruscan. The Spanish offerings might as well have been piled in the barn by the site of Veii; the Veian offerings might as well have been hung in the modern shrine.

Reflection on this striking identity has been, like the experience in Skutari, two-edged. At first the pathos of it all was uppermost—two thousand years and more, and still no change! But the very persistence of unaltered hope has a challenging nobility in itself; and the undiminished eagerness of man's outreaching beyond his own power, the unconquerableness of man's desire to lay hold on some great source of fulness of life, leads one, at the least, to the resolution, religious in its essence, to do all that one can in the mediation of an ever larger life to the humanity which so intensely craves it through the ages.

VII

The Shapes of Life

The shapes of life: the circle, the square, the triangle . . . . and one other.

I

We seek in college to give what we call, for the sake of brevity, an "all-round education"; we preach the development of the all-round man; and college men are wont to accept the ideal as valid. Not in words, perhaps, but in fact, which is better.

To be sure, the circle is sometimes rather small. One hears oftenest, perhaps, of an all-round athlete. The remark, "He's an all-round good fellow," is not infrequent, and it carries a measure of real, if limited, praise. The basic idea is there in both cases.

And men do seek to fill out the larger circle. I know few men who are content to be merely scholars, or merely athletes, or merely prominent in some one other way. I have, indeed, known many who forced the issue for the sake of roundness—scholars who, with slight athletic gifts, stuck to the squad, or just "also ran"; athletes who saw their abilities in due proportion and worked far harder to win the difficult games of mind and will

than they ever worked "on diamond, field, and track."

Modern plans of curricular guidance aim more definitely at an all-round intellectual equipment than any which we have known before; and it should not be difficult, with the educational circle drawn and defined before the student's eyes, to win his ready co-operation in the attainment of this aim.

But our lives tend, nevertheless, to be less than circular: to be one-sided, with just the hint of a development beyond the center, like a star and crescent or like the new moon in the old moon's arms; or to erupt to just a few points on a circumference, like a starfish; or to attempt the full ring and sag badly here and there, like a flat tire.

Two things, it seems to me, are much to be desired. First, that we try to keep in mind the full circle of life's values—values for every phase of interest, relationship, and activity; values familiar and unfamiliar; values immediate and ultimate; values so rich and varied that the sheer effort fairly to depict them all is a value in itself. Second, that we realize that the circumference of a life so conceived is not static: it is conditioned rather on the maintenance of a constant radius of thought and will; and it tends ever, even if it retain rotundity, to shrink or to expand—to shrink toward a central egotism, or to expand into an ever larger and happier self of manifold companionship.

II

Yet any man, I think, would prefer to the recognition of all-roundness the simple words: "He is square." You can rely on him. He isn't sinuous. He won't roll away. He has straight lines and right angles, and they brace each other. He is measured, balanced, predictable. You can go from one point in his life to another with the same certainty with which the referee moves a football between the first and second quarters of a game.

A square man is ready to take what's coming to him. Not for nothing is the classic formation of military defense the hollow square. It is the shape of alertness and of courage.

The square man is ready to bear the next man's burden. Not for nothing is the square an essential implement of the builder in design and in fulfilment. Only if each stone be truly square will the edifice endure. Only if each man be truly square will the social structure rise in beauty and in stability.

III

Life, in many of its aspects, is triangular.

The symbol of the Y.M.C.A., with its three lines for body, mind, and spirit, is valid still; though we know far better than in earlier days that the three lines represent three interwoven phases of a single organism.

Philosophy's great triangle—the true, the good, and the beautiful—is luminous in modern as in ancient thought.

But the first and fundamental triangle of life is the triangle of the home, complete in the varying love and varying life of father, mother, and children. This thing is too intimate and too obvious to bear elaboration; but it is eternally true.

The so-called "eternal triangle"—husband, wife, and rival—has no right to the geometric name which it claims in veiled and vain apology; for it is no triangle at all, but an abnormal rending and distorting of the lines of the true triangle of the home.

The lines of that triangle are the basic lines of human happiness and human worth.

IV

Yet the truest shape for the whole of life is not the circle, nor the square, nor the triangle; it is a shape less simple, far more adequate, infinitely more significant; it is the shape of the cross.

For life should rise as with a long shaft of knowledge, deep-planted in reality. Else will life bend and fail, its very power turning to destruction. Knowledge of the basic conditions of life, their offerings, their limitations—in order that man may be as master, not as slave, to that which is less than man. Knowledge of the inner nature and central motives of mankind, knowledge of men other

than one's self—knowledge so supremely needful, so hardly to be won. Knowledge that all our knowledge is but a fragment of the ultimate whole.

And life should fling wide—to the fullest limits of its reach—the arms of its interest, of its love, of its action. The fulness of the world, the world of nature and of man, the world of joy and tragedy, of defeat and victory, the world thus far created, the world in process of new creation wherein we may share—how it summons us—to what endless inpourings and outpourings of vitality!

Upward still, above the outspread arms, rises the head of the cross. Even so life should tower upward beyond knowledge, beyond action. Knowledge knows its own imperfection. Action at the last overspends itself. But life may transcend—into the consciousness of that greater life which fills it, enfolds it, and bears it on.

VIII

Liberalism

The idea of liberalism is very prominent in the minds of thoughtful collegians of the present day. By "collegians" I mean both faculty and undergraduates, both men and women. And by "thoughtful collegians" I mean those collegians who really do some serious thinking on their own account.

About the most scornful thing that a thoughtful collegian can say of anyone today is that he is not liberal. To call a man not liberal is the intellectual equivalent of calling him yellow. And by the same token pretty much every thoughtful collegian regards himself as a liberal. The men who admit to themselves or to anyone else that they are not liberals are few and far between.

But calling yourself a liberal—or talking about liberalism—does not make you a liberal. You know that flashing line in one of the negro spirituals: "Everybody talk about Heaven—ain't goin' there." I am sometimes tempted to say, on that model: "Everybody talk about liberal—ain't bein' it."

What is liberalism?

The word "liberalism" belongs to an ancient and

honorable family. Its first cousins in English are the two great words "liberty" and "liberality"; and you can trace the family back, far beyond the Norman Conquest, to the free citizenry of ancient Rome. The root idea in all these words is of course the idea of being free, which is one of the two or three greatest—and hardest—of all human ideas.

But liberalism is not just being free. It is not a synonym of liberty; it is not a synonym of liberality. Just what is it? I have been trying to answer that question to my own satisfaction, and am ready to offer you a definition of the idea, with a little comment. I shall build up the definition gradually, following the course which my own thought has taken.

Liberalism is clearly a certain attitude of mind. It has to do with beliefs. Not with any or all beliefs, not with beliefs about particular people or particular events, but with beliefs about human relations in the large—beliefs mainly about social habits, about economic and political systems, about educational policies, about ethical standards, and about religious experience.

It has to do, in the main, that is, with the six fields of sociology, economics, political science, education, ethics, and religion. It has to do, in other words, with the field of the social sciences and with certain closely related fields. And it has to do with them precisely because they are the great

fields of belief concerning human relations in the large.

In speaking of these fields as fields of belief I do not mean to belittle them. For belief is in itself a noble thing when it rests on the most careful possible study of the best available evidence. But in these social fields we have as yet no such well-established masses of conclusions based on almost infinitely repeated experiment as we have in the physical sciences. There is therefore room in these fields for honest differences in belief; and there is therefore room—and need—for liberalism.

Liberalism, then, is a certain attitude of mind having to do with beliefs about human relations in the large. But that is not a definition. It is merely a preface to a definition. To turn it into a definition we must replace that general phrase, "a certain attitude of mind," by something specific and significant.

I suggest this, to begin with: Liberalism is a readiness to believe, in the field of human relations in the large, that the unfamiliar may be better than the familiar. To believe, for instance, that some unfamiliar type of economic organization may be better than a familiar type, or that some unfamiliar religious idea may be better than a familiar one.

The definition would be simpler and more picturesque if I could use the words "new" and "old"

instead of "unfamiliar" and "familiar"—if I could say, "Liberalism is a readiness to believe that the new may be better than the old." But I cannot honestly say that, for I am trying to reach a sound definition, and the words "new" and "old" do not quite fit. In general, to be sure, the unfamiliar is the new and the familiar is the old. But not always. If you happen to be more familiar with what is new than with what is old, liberalism for you may consist in being open-minded toward the old. Liberalism in the Renaissance consisted precisely in reviving the old ideas of Greece and Rome and substituting them for the relatively new ideas of the Middle Ages. There is very little difference, after all, between our yesterdays and our todays: yesterday's fractional guess at truth is likely to be just about as good as our own. Civilization moves gradually upward, but it does not move in a straight line. It moves in an irregular curve which sways and dips from time to time.

Liberalism, then, is a readiness to believe, in the field in question, that the unfamiliar may be better than the familiar.

But that is not enough. It is the necessary starting-point—for if your mind is closed to the possibility that the unfamiliar may be better than the familiar, you will never know the light of liberalism. But readiness to believe is not enough. A lib-

eralism which was merely that would be a pallid and a passive sort of thing. If liberalism is to have a real vitality, it must go farther.

It must include, as its second phase, readiness to tolerate experimentation which is designed to show whether the unfamiliar is in truth better than the familiar. And a really energetic liberalism would not merely tolerate such experimentation—it would promote it.

Liberalism, that is to say, does not jump to the conclusion that the unfamiliar, just because it is unfamiliar, is better than the familiar. Liberalism is not swept off its feet by mere novelty. It wants to be shown, and to be shown as scientifically as possible. The social sciences cannot rival the physical sciences in the display of conclusions based on almost infinitely repeated experiment; but the social sciences are gradually working out a technique of human experimentation comparable to that of the physical sciences, and our conclusions as to human relations in the large will ultimately rest on the results of scientific experimentation. Indeed, I venture to prophesy that just as the distinguishing feature of the present age of humanity is experimentation on a vast scale in the physical sciences, so the distinguishing feature of the next age of humanity—to begin perhaps in about five hundred years—will be experimentation on a vast scale in the social sciences, nationally or internationally

authorized and controlled, with hosts of human beings as the religiously willing subjects of experiment.

Modern liberalism cannot await such ultimate research: it can and must demand the evidence to be had from the best research now possible.

But liberalism even in this second phase is not complete. One stage remains. Liberalism involves the readiness to *accept* the unfamiliar when convinced by experiment that it is better than the familiar. And a really energetic liberalism would not only accept the unfamiliar in such a case, it would champion the unfamiliar.

For liberalism is not merely passive. It involves action within the mind. It involves, at times, that hardest of mental actions—the dismissal of a familiar belief and its replacement by an unfamiliar one. And a really energetic liberalism involves action beyond the mind. It involves, at times, the avowal and the proclamation of the unfamiliar beliefs which have been accepted, and the willingness to work and to suffer for their triumph in a society which congenitally dreads and opposes liberalism.

Piece by piece I have built up and sought to justify my definition. Let me now state it finally and completely: Liberalism is an attitude of mind, in the field of human relations in the large, including first, readiness to believe that the unfamiliar may be better than the familiar; second, readiness to

tolerate and to promote experimentation designed to show whether the unfamiliar is in truth better than the familiar; and third, readiness to accept and to champion the unfamiliar when convinced that it is better than the familiar.

To this definition I add a question, a paraphrase, a twofold caution, and a hope.

The question, which I shall not answer, is this: On what basis can you decide, in the field of human relations, whether one idea or one system is in truth *better* than another?

The paraphrase is this: Liberalism is the acceptance, in the field of human relations, of the fullest implications of the concept of evolution, plus the consciousness that we are in some measure able to control evolution.

The caution is this. First: Let no man claim too lightly that he is indeed a liberal. The field of human relations is very large and very intricate. Few men are liberal in all respects. They are apt to be least liberal in those fields of thought which are closest and dearest to them. Anyone can relinquish a belief which is not dear; the test comes when the challenge strikes intimately home. Second: Let no man think to achieve liberalism through careless surrender of the familiar. The true liberal cherishes that which he has, and yields it only at the compelling call of sober reason.

My hope is this: That we, as members of a col-

lege faculty and student body, may ever more completely achieve and practice a true liberalism. The American college has been called, traditionally, a "liberal" college. That great adjective, as thus used, has had a very special historic meaning. I propose that in so far as in us lies we seek to be, not only in the old sense, but also in the new sense which I have sought to define, a liberal college.

IX

September

Men and Women of Oberlin:

On behalf of the College I extend to you a hearty welcome as you return, or as you come for the first time, to this community.

That statement is formal, even conventional; but in spite of its formality it is intensely true. We are glad to see you; we shall do our very best to make the year worth while for you; and we hope that it will bring you great happiness and great satisfaction.

We invite you to companionship with us; and we invite you to a far larger companionship. For here, as in every college community, there dwell, in a very real sense, the spirits of the great men and women of the past, and the spirits of those great men and women of our own time whose physical dwelling is elsewhere.

College indeed exists to shatter your limitations in time and in space; to add new dimensions to your experience; to bring you face to face with men and women, otherwise remote, who have something to say to you. Isaac Newton is in spirit here, and Dar-

win and Michelson; Plato and William James and Bertrand Russell; Joan of Arc, Lincoln, Aristide Briand; Dante, Tolstoy, Joseph Conrad; Velasquez, Monet, Michelangelo; Beethoven, Bach, Debussy; Fosdick, Francis of Assisi, Paul of Tarsus.

For these spirits do indeed live and move, transcending time, transcending distance. They live for you here in books, in color, in sound, and in the minds of those of us who have won their friendship. And it is not merely fanciful to say that they are eager to know you, to pass on to you their discoveries, their experience, their philosophy of life.

You are in truth the heirs of all the ages.

But you are more than that. You are yourselves; you are living here and now. Days will bring you sunshine and color and wind and sport and freedom. Nights will bring you stars and hearthfires and bonfires and song and peace. You will be growing in vision and in power, and will have the joy of that growth. You are in life now. Live, then, and so live that each day may enrich both itself and the days that are to come.

For society, though it loves to see you here, does not bring you here just for the sake of your happiness in these four years. Society brings you here, provides the College for you, because society needs your help in the solution of its well-nigh desperate problems, in the development of its wonderful opportunities.

The shadow of crime is dark upon our land. How shall the law, tangled, slow, thwarted, be set free to demonstrate the due result of crime? And, more important still, how may we find and isolate and kill the germ of criminality before it fatally infects the life which contains it, and other lives?

What of the fight for temperance? Oberlin men have played a noble part in that fight. And it is far from being won.

How shall we guide and further the dawning unification of capital and labor? How shall we bring that unification about where hardness and hatred still remain?

How shall we lay forever the red specter of war? And, more important still, how shall we build a structure of economic and social justice and good will among the nations?

How shall we of America assimilate the foreign masses nested among us, who still hold aloof, rebuffed and sullen?

The battle against disease calls ever for new recruits, eager in the confidence of their modern knowledge, inspirited with the eternal spirit of ministry.

Educational theory and organization are chaotic. Who will give us light?

How shall we bring the clergy to concentrate their united strength upon the essence of the Christian message?

Every day brings some wonderful increment to man's mastery over physical nature. Shall these new powers be used for man's real good or for man's real harm?

For the vast majority of human beings life is still chained in ignorance, dreary with suffering. Yet life is potentially a joyous comradeship.

Men and Women of Oberlin:

In the name of the College I offer you the heritage of the past; I wish you full joy in the present; I challenge you with the need of the future.

X

Commencement

Faculty to Seniors:

We also, we who stay, are not the same
  As if your lives and ours had never crossed.
  Amid the summer shadows you are lost
To us, in bodily presence; yet each name
Stirs more than memory. You to us were flame
  Of penetrant vision; you were trouble-tossed
  In storms we sought to share; were deep-engrossed
In the fervid play of the restless college game.

You were castles remote, red-flowering thorn,
  Star-joy, still harmonies, treasure-ships of youth,
Dark mountain valleys at the break of morn.
We are woven of what you were. Our onward strife
  We have woven in you: be then our truer truth,
Our stronger love, our more abundant life!

Note

The talks numbered I, V, and IX and the concluding poem have been previously published. No. I was published in the *International Journal of Ethics* for April, 1926, under the title "Past and Future: An Ethical Perspective." No. V was given in substance as a Commencement address at Western Reserve University in June, 1928, and as a Convocation address at Beloit College in September, 1928; and was published as a pamphlet by Western Reserve University in 1928, and in the *Beloit Alumnus* for September-October, 1928. No. IX (my first talk to the students of Oberlin College) was published in the *Oberlin Alumni Magazine* for October, 1927. No. X was written for the Oberlin College Senior Class of 1929, and was published in the *Bystander* (an Oberlin student monthly) and in the *Oberlin Alumni Magazine* in June, 1929.

No. II was given in the University of Chicago Chapel on the Hiram W. Thomas Foundation in November, 1928.

No. IV was spoken in impersonation of Rameses II at a dinner given by Professor T. G. Soares of the University of Chicago in honor of Professor Breasted, shortly before his departure for an archaeological expedition. The "Tale of the General of the Armies of Amenhotep" is modeled on a tale to be found in the *Cento novelle antiche*—a thirteenth-century Italian collection.

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